



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

Sex Offender Research Council Minutes of Regular Meeting

**Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Avenue, Legislative Dining Room
Des Moines, Iowa**

November 16, 2016

Present: Jerry Bartruff; Tiffany Conroy; Mitch Mortvedt for Terry Cowman; Andrea Muelhaupt for John Hodges; Kurt Swaim; Daniel Zeno; Rebecca Stout
Ex-officio: Sen. Tom Shipley

Staff: Steve Michael; Kile Beisner; Sarah Fineran; Julie Rinker; Lanette Watson; Taylor Barry, Intern

Others: Sheila Corsbie; Anna Hyatt; Cathy Engel; Bill Freeland; Michelle Leonard; Hon. Jeffrey Neary; Lettie Prell; Marty Ryan; Alice Wisner

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Steve Michael, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2015

Kurt Swaim moved to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2015, meeting, seconded by Jerry Bartruff.

III. Reports

• Intersection of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Sarah Fineran and Taylor Barry presented findings of the draft report “An Analysis of Domestic Abuse and Sex Offense in Iowa”. The report will serve as this Council’s report to the legislature and is due January 15. The following was reported:

- The analysis focused on the differences between the types of offenders, victim-offender relationships, and variables pertinent to the offense.
- Only three individuals convicted of domestic violence had a prior conviction of a sex crime; and three individuals convicted of a sex crime had a prior conviction of domestic violence.
- Due to the low number of domestic violence and sexual assault cases that intersect based on conviction, consideration is being given to look at charge data.
- The study found that a majority of offenders convicted of domestic abuse or sex

- offenses were male, Caucasian, and between the ages of 18 and 39.
- Overall, victims of domestic violence were over age 18, while sex crime victims were under age 18.

Fineran suggested further study to determine the number of cases where the original charge was reduced. Council members discussed concerns regarding the study of *charges* rather than *convictions* and noted the following:

- Plea bargaining is part of the criminal justice process.
- How would this study take into consideration the presumption of innocence?
- Charges can be based upon a combination of 'hearsay', facts, behavior, etc. It may be difficult to separate this and draw an accurate conclusion.

Kile Beisner reported there is national interest in studying any local instances of new mandatory minimum laws. The project would contribute to the federal database and serve as a research project for next year's SORC report. Beisner added that the study would also identify impact in Iowa if mandatory minimums were established for habitual domestic offenders, as there was legislation proposed during the 2016 session.

Further discussion suggested the following be incorporated into the report: 'choking' changed to 'strangulation'; 'escaped charges' changed to 'a reduction in charges'. The report will indicate that the charges studied were criminal code related, not civil.

Kurt Swaim moved to approve the report with the above modifications, seconded by Jerry Bartruff. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. Public Comment

None

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker
Administrative Secretary
Div. of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning
Iowa Department of Human Rights